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Majlis Ansarullah Pledge

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَّا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهُ وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ

I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. He is One and has no partner and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.

I solemnly pledge that I shall endeavour throughout my life for the propagation and consolidation of Ahmadiyyat in Islam and shall stand guard in defence of the institution of Khilafat. I shall not hesitate to offer any sacrifice in this regard. Moreover, I shall exhort my children to always remain dedicated and devoted to Khilafat. Insha Allah.

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Editorial

Excellence of the Holy Qur an demonstrated by the Promised Messiah

A distinctive feature of Islam, not shared by any other religion, is God Almighty's promise to safeguard the teaching of the Holy Qur'an. God says in the Qur'an: *"Verily it is We Who have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We are its Guardian"* (Al-Hijr, 15:10). It is not only the text of the Holy Qur'an that has been preserved intact by God but the preservation of its spirit has also been promised. Preservation of the spirit means that there will be a time when people will go astray from the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the eagerness and sweetness of faith will depart from their hearts, and when this time prevails over Muslims, God will raise amongst them a people who will renovate the spirit of the Holy Qur'an and reform the religion as vividly mentioned in various Ahadith.

A number of renovators have been born in Islam but the most distinctive were the Mujaddid or 'Reformers' who appeared in every century of Islam as prophesised by the Holy Prophet (pboh). It is narrated by Hadhrat Abu Huraira'h that the Holy Prophet (pboh) said: *"Verily God shall raise for this community, at the beginning of every century, one who will renovate for it its religion."* (Abu Daud). In the same way it is mentioned in Bukhari: *"If faith were at the place of Ath-Thuraiya (Pleiades, the highest star), even then some people from Persian descent would attain it."*

It is evident from these Ahadith that the coming of the Promised Messiah would coincide with the time when knowledge of the Holy Qur'an vanished and ignorance prevailed in the world. Thus the world would require from God someone to appear in order to renovate its religious vaues. It was at exactly such a time that the Promised Messiah claimed to be appointed by God in accordance with the prophecies of the Holy Prophet (pboh) in order to demonstrate the truth and excellence of the Holy Qur'an in a manner unparalleled.

He said: *"Consider this well and do not pass over it in haste and supplicate to God that He should open your minds to it. A little reflection will make you understand the prophecy contained in the hadith that in the latter days the Qur'an will be taken away from the world, its knowledge will be lost, ignorance will prevail and the eagerness and sweetness of faith will depart from the heart. Among them is the hadith that if faith will ascend to the Pleiades and will disappear from the earth, a man of Persian origin will extend his hand and will bring it down. This hadith shows clearly that when ignorance, faithlessness and error, which are described as 'smoke' in the other Ahadith, will become widespread and true faith will become so rare as if it had been drawn up to the skies, and the Holy Qur'an will be abandoned as if it had been raised towards God Almighty, at that time, a man of Persia will take hold of the faith from the Pleiades and will descend with it to the earth. Be sure, therefore, that he is the son of Mary who was to descend* (Izala-e-Auham, Ruhani Khaza'in Vol. 3, pp.455, 456).

Moreover, the Promised Messiah says: *"I call to witness God Almighty, Who holds my life in His hands, that compared to every other soul, He has gifted me with an overwhelmingly greater ability and access to the understanding and the deeper wisdom of the Holy Qur'an. If any of the Maulvis (traditional Muslim scholars) who oppose me in response to my repeated invitations had attempted to outshine me in the exposition of the Holy Qur'an, God would have most certainly frustrated his attempts and exposed his ignorance. Hence, the understanding of the Qur'an which has been granted to me is a Sign of Allah, the Glorious, and I have full trust in Allah's grace that soon the world will begin to see that I am true in this claim."* (Roohani Khazain Vol. 12: Siraj-ul-Muneer, p 41).

Therefore, it was mandatory for the Promised One to have an overwhelmingly greater ability and access to the deeper wisdom of the Holy Qur'an as a sign from God of his truthfulness. Thus he would cleanse Islam of all unnecessary customs and superstitions and restore its eminence and glory which it enjoyed in the early days over all others. The books of the Promised Messiah, known as "Ruhani Khaza'in " are the detailed commentaries of the Holy Qur'an, and as such, stand witness to the fact that he was bestowed with an extraordinarily abundant wealth of knowledge about the deeper meanings of the Holy Qur'an and these works stand as a monument to his divine source.

Darsul Qur an

A Prayer to be recited often

Of them there are some who say: 'Our Lord, grant us good in this world as well as good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of the Fire. (Al-Baqarah, 2:202)

In this verse God mentions that the class of men whose efforts and wishes are not confined to this world only. They (1) seek the good things of this world, and (2) seek the good things of the next world, and (3) try and be saved from the fire which not only signifies the fire of hell but also everything that is painful and is a source of heart-burning. It may be noted that here, unlike the preceding verse, God uses the word "*Hassana*" (good) with this words *"Fid-dunya"* (in this world), meaning that even virtuous men may seek the things of this world but they should always be good and not bad.

The prayer mentioned in this verse is indeed very comprehensive and may be used by men of all grades in all their spiritual and temporal requirements, and, the Holy Prophet (pboh) is reported to have used this prayer very often (Muslim, ch. On Dhikr) with a view to teaching his companions that if and when they choose to seek both the good things of this world and of the next, they should pray like this.

This prayer has another significance also. The good things of this world and the good things of the Hereafter spoken of in this verse may both stand for spiritual blessings, the good things of this world standing for such spiritual blessings as a righteous man gets in this world and the good things of the next world standing for those which he will get Hereafter. In fact, the very words used in this point to that signification, for the Quranic words "*Fiddunya hassana*' do not mean "good things of this world" but simply "good in this world." In this case, "Alnar' or "the fire", would not mean Hell, protection against which is, in fact, included in the good things of the next world, but for such trials and hardships as one may come across in this world in the struggle for spiritual advancement or in the effort to benefit others. It was in this sense that the Holy Prophet (pboh) used this prayer with regard to himself; for personally he never sought even the good things of this world, though he always sought "good in this world."

The Promised Messiah also admonished that this verse should be frequently recited in the last Rakooh of every prayer.

Advent of the Promised Messiah resembles the Hour of Resurrection

Commenting on the verse ***Malike Yaumiddeen*** (Master of the Day of Judgment) of Surah Al-Fatihah, the Promised Messiah says: The similarity between our Prophet (pboh) and Moses, and the similarity between the Successors of Moses and of our Noble Prophet entailed that there should appear, during the latter period of this Dispensation, a man in the likeness of the Messiah, who should call people to Allah with kindly admonition, dismiss war, sheathe the sword that destroys and grant new life to people through the bright signs of the Gracious One, and not by the sword or spear. His time will thus be like the Hour of Resurrection and the Day of Requital. He will fill the earth with light even as before him it was filled with tyranny and falsehood. Allah had determined that He would show mankind a sample of the Day of Requital before its actual appearance and bestow new life on mankind after the death of righteousness. That is the very time of the Promised Messiah, that is to say, of this humble servant, and it is referred to in the phrase ***yaumiddeen*** (Day of Requital) in this verse. So let those who reflect who are given to reflection.

(Ijazul Masih, pp. 136-160, quoted in "Commentary on the Holy Qur an, Vol I, pp. 158-159)

Dars-ul-Hadith

On Repentance, Steadfastness and Truthfulness

On Repentance

Abu Hurairah relates that he heard the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, say: "Allah is my witness, that I seek forgiveness of Allah and turn to Him more than seventy times a day' (Bokhari).

Anas ibn Malik, servant of the Holy Prophet, pboh, said: "Allah is more pleased with the repentance of a servant of His than would be one of you who were to lose his camel in a barren desert and then find it suddenly.' (Bokhari and Muslim). The version in Muslim adds: "Allah is more pleased with the repentance of a servant of His than would be one of you who were to lose his riding camel, which carries his food and drink, in a barren desert, and, losing all hope of finding it, he were to lie down in the shade of a tree, and then should suddenly find it standing near him and should seize its nose-string and in his excess of joy should blurt out: 'O Allah, Thou art my servant and I am Thy Lord. '

On Steadfastness

Abu Malik Ash ari relates that the Holy Prophet, pboh, said: "Cleanliness is half of faith; the utterance of *'All praise belongs to Allah* fills the scales of good works. The utterance of *'Holy is Allah and worthy of all praise* fills the space between the heavens and the earth. Prayer is light; charity is proof of faith; steadfastness is a glow and the Qur an is a plea in your favour or against you. Everyone begins the morning ready to bargain with his soul as a stake and ransoms it or ruins it.' (Muslim)

Suhaib ibn Sinan relates that the Holy Prophet, pboh, said: "Wondrous is the case of a believer - there is good for him in everything, and it is so for him alone. If he experiences something agreeable, he is grateful to God and that is good for him. If he experiences adversity, he is steadfast and that is good for him' (Muslim).

Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet, pboh, said: "Allah, the Exalted, says: 'I have no reward other than Paradise for a believing servant of mine who is steadfast when I take away a beloved one of him from among the denizens of the world ' (Bokhari).

Anas relates that the Holy Prophet, pboh, said: "No one of you should wish for death because of any misfortune that befalls him. Should anyone be sore afflicted, he should say: 'Allah, keep me alive so long as life is the better for me and cause me to die when death is the better for me ' (Bokhari and Muslim).

On Truthfulness

Abdullah ibn Mas ud relates that the Holy Prophet, pboh, said: "Truth guides to virtue and virtue guides to Paradise. A person persists in telling the truth till in the sight of Allah he is named Truthful. Lying leads to vice and vice leads to the Fire; and a person goes on lying till in the sight of Allah he is named a liar.' (Bokhari and Muslim)

Hasan ibn Ali relates that he learnt the following from the Holy Prophet, pboh: "Leave alone that which involves thee in doubt and adhere to that which is free from doubt, for truth is comforting, falsehood is disturbing' (Tirmidhi).

Hakim ibn Hizam relates that the Holy Prophet, pboh, said: "A sale agreement is revocable till the buyer and seller part company. If they tell the truth and disclose everything relevant to the transaction, it becomes full of blessings for both of them; but if they speak falsely and conceal that which should be disclosed, the blessing of the transaction is wiped out' (Bokhari and Muslim).

Writings of the Promised Messiah (as)
Steadfastness & Righteousness

Attain Nearness to God

If you want that God should be pleased with you in heaven, unite and be one like two brothers of the same mother. Nobler is he among you who forgives the sins of his brother more than others; doomed is he who is stubborn and does not forgive - he has nothing in common with me. Live in fear, lest you be cursed by God. He is Holy and He is a jealous Guardian over the honour of His beloved ones. The wicked cannot attain His nearness, the arrogant cannot gain His nearness, nor can the tyrant, nor the one who breaks trust. Nor can he, who is not ready to lay down everything for the honour of His name, nor those who fall to the pleasures of the world like dogs and ants and vultures and who are comfortable with the luxuries of the world.

Each unchaste eye is remote from Him; each impure heart knows Him not. Those who remain in agony for His cause will be delivered from the fire of hell. He who weeps for Him will laugh last and He who breaks away from the world for His sake will meet Him.

Be Allah s friends with all your heart, in all sincerity, gaining His nearness with ever growing zeal. Be kind to your subordinates, to your wives and to your less fortunate brothers so that you may be shown kindness in heaven. Become truly His so that He may belong to you.

(Roohani Khazain Vol. 19: Kashti-e-Nuh, pp12-13)

Fulfil Your Obligations and Remain Steadfast

So listen all you who consider yourselves to be of my community. When you truly tread the path of righteousness, only then you will be counted in heaven as my community. So perform your prayers five times a day inspired by such awe and awareness of the presence of Almighty God as if you were seeing Him with your own eyes. Also observe the days of fast sincerely for the sake of Allah, fulfilling their requirements. Each one of you who is assessable to Zakat, should pay Zakat. Similarly anyone upon whom pilgrimage has become obligatory and has no cause for exemption must perform the Pilgrimage. Do good deeds in the best of manners and reject evil with repugnance. Remember that no deed of yours which is devoid of righteousness will ever be entertained by God. An act of goodness is only that which is rooted in the fear of God. No act in which the roots remain intact will be permitted to go to waste.

It is inevitable that you should be tried with diverse trials of pain and misfortune as the faithful before you were tried. So remain always wary lest you should stumble. The earth can do you no harm as long as you have firm ties with heaven. If you ever come to grief, you will come to grief at your own hands rather than at the hands of your enemies. If you lose all honour on this earth, God will bestow an eternal honour upon you in heaven. So leave Him not. You are bound to suffer pain at their hands and you will be deprived of the fulfilment of many of your aspirations. But be not heavy-hearted; God merely tries you whether you are steadfast in His cause or not.

If you desire that angels should praise you in heaven then suffer in the path of Allah with grace and remain cheerful. Hear abuse and remain grateful and despite frustration break not your ties (with God). You are the last people raised by God so do such deeds of piety as touch the loftiest standards of excellence.

(Roohani Khazain Vol. 19: Kashti Nuh, p17)

Instructions of Khalifatul Masih V

The Delight of Our Eyes

In his Friday Sermon of 14 November 2008, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V made mention of the following prayer of the Holy Qur'an:

Our Lord, grant us of our spouses and children the delight of our eyes, and make each of us a leader of the righteous (Al-Furqan, 25:75)

He said that this is a most comprehensive prayer, the virtues of which is limitless beyond man's understanding. Taken in conjunction with Allah's promise in Sura Al-Sajdah (32:18) *And no soul knows what joy of the eyes is kept hidden for them, as a reward for the good they used to do*, Huzoor said that people who are thus bestowed are those whose level of *taqwa* enables them to worship Allah, spend in His cause and do other virtuous acts. They wake up at night and supplicate to Allah to tread the straight path and for their children to tread the straight path and seek that 'delight of eyes the knowledge of which only Allah has.

This is the prayer that is made by people who are 'servants of the Gracious God and who try and leave behind a progeny that is firm on *taqwa*. Allah has drawn our attention to a most significant aspect through this prayer, that we should not simply seek the pleasure of God for ourselves, rather also for our future generations.

Each one of us needs to reflect while making this prayer whether we fulfil each others rights, whether we fulfil the rights of our children that would lead them to *taqwa*. If husband and wife do not adhere to *taqwa* themselves, how can they expect their children to abide by it and how can they expect them to derive all the spiritual advantages of adhering to *taqwa*, including the blessings of Khilafat.

The Holy Prophet (pboh) said that may Allah have mercy on that person who wakes up at night [to Pray] and also awakens his wife and if she hesitates he sprinkles some water on her face. Allah have mercy on that woman who wakes up at night and also awakens her husband and if he hesitates she sprinkles some water on his face. Huzoor said the duty is mutual.

The Holy Prophet (pboh) also said that a father cannot leave a better gift for his children than a good, moral upbringing. Huzoor said good upbringing is only possible when one s own standards are also sound and worthy of emulating. In order to make their children the delight of their eyes, parents have to reform themselves first and set good examples.

Huzoor said he receives complaints about some men who are not regular in their prayers. How can such people say the prayer of: *'Our Lord, grant us of our spouses and children the delight of our eyes...* and hope for it to be accepted?

Referring to the above Hadith, Huzoor said it is only possible to awaken one s spouse for Prayer in the early hours if there is mutual love and affection and an understanding that they have to help each other with the night time Prayers. Otherwise, Huzoor said, there are instances where wives are subjected to harsh words when they try to waken husbands for Prayers. In some cases husbands even resort to hitting the wives. This is effectively what happens in some households. Gradually, the women withdraw and carry on with their own Prayers or follow the path of the husbands. As a consequence the children lose out in religious terms.

We are fortunate that Allah has taught us a prayer for our good in this world and the hereafter and that of our children and from this He only wishes us to learn ways and means of seeking good in this world and the hereafter and is bestowing us.

We need to engage in introspection and try and tread those paths that help to attain Allah s pleasure. We should maintain the peace of our homes, find delight in our children and each Ahmadi household should abide by *taqwa*. This is what will derive full benefit from Khilafat and will make us those who honour the dues of being part of the Community of the slave of the Holy Prophet (pboh).

Freedom of Speech and Tolerance in Islam

An Address by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V

Delivered in Baitul Futuh Morden on 25 March 2006

All the distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,
Peace and blessings of Allah be upon you

"Islam requires belief and respect of all Prophets

Some months ago, a Danish newspaper published some cartoons about the Holy Founder of Islam, Hadhrat Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) in which, unfortunately, an attempt was made to show that the law and teaching brought by him is one of extremism. As a result, terrorism and cruelty has begun to grow in the hearts of the followers of Islam. It is alleged that Muslims believe that the solution to all their problems lies in adopting a cruel and barbaric attitude. According to them, there is no concept of tolerance, reconciliation or love and affection in Islam.

Non-Muslims draw this conclusion based on the incorrect behaviour and improper actions of the so-called Jihadi organisations (that is to say those who are trigger-happy and call their act a holy war) and the attacks of their suicide bombers. Instead of solving issues through love and understanding, they display obstinacy and intolerance. Then, some scholars of today, unfortunately, support such Jihadi organisations even though their actions are totally opposed to the teachings of Islam. But I wish to say just one thing that may perhaps be construed as if I am supporting such Jihadi organisations.

The ultimate decisive authority assumed by the superpowers in respect of the poor and under-developed nations and the double standards in the manner in which the superpowers deal with these nations, is the cause of this violent natural reaction by these nations.

Admittedly, this is not an Islamic method and is totally against the teachings of Islam. However, in this day, and age, the trend not to conform to the teachings of one's faith is as prevalent amongst followers of other religions as it is amongst Muslims, whose majority only pay by lip-service to Islamic values even though their deeds are not Islamic.

In due course, a reformer is needed to make the act of the people conform to the teachings. This is why the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community holds the belief that when, with the passage of time, the people begin to forget the teachings of their faith, then equipped with guidance from God, God sends prophets or reformers who bring mankind back to the ways of God, and thus remind man to discharge the obligations due to the Creator and His creation. We Muslims believe that there have been 124,000 messengers who have come to the world. They identified the One God and taught man to live in love and affection with each other. The last person to bring a new Law and teaching was Hadhrat Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). In other words, a Muslim believes in all prophets and reformers from Adam to Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all.

Moreover, an Ahmadi Muslim believes that in accordance with what past prophets prophesied about a Reformer for the latter days, that Reformer has indeed come and we believe in him. Nevertheless, the Law and teaching is, of course, the same as that brought by Hadhrat Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him).

The purpose of this introduction is that a religion that requires belief in and respect of all prophets and believes that the teachings revealed to them at the time of their advent was true, then how can it be said that such a religion does not teach tolerance of other faiths? How can it not teach reconciliation and harmony with other faiths? How can it teach the habit of religious intolerance and advocate living with others in anything but love and affection? It is impossible. That there is no forbearance in this religion and no freedom of opinion or speech is an unfounded allegation against Islam.

In keeping with the constraints of time, I shall highlight a few examples of what the teachings of Islam are about tolerance; what the meaning of the freedom of expression and the right to hold an opinion are; what practical example the Prophet of Islam (pboh) established of this beautiful teaching;

and the tradition set by those Muslims who followed in his footsteps. I hope that as a result, some prominent aspects of this beautiful teaching will become clear.

"Meanings of the word Islam

But firstly, I would like to say that the very name 'Islam' contains an antidote for cruelty, the inability to put up with others and the absence of tolerance. I shall define some of the main meanings that the word 'Islam' incorporates. One meaning is peace, another meaning is submission and obedience, yet another is making peace and achieving reconciliation. One meaning is to leave someone when he is likely to cause you harm, another meaning is to walk together in harmony.

The purpose of telling you about these definitions of the name of Islam given by God Almighty to this religion is because the sum total of its teachings and the Muhammadan Laws include within it love, tolerance, endurance, and freedom of conscience and speech and the right to express an opinion.

After this brief clarification, let me mention the teachings about the freedom of conscience, belief and opinion and tolerance that the Holy Qur'an (the Sacred Book of Muslims) gives us. It should be remembered that when something is attributed to a religion, then the first point of reference has to be that religion's book of law in which the legal code, tenets, and teachings are set out.

When the Holy Prophet (pboh) claimed that he was a Messenger and by the command of Allah Almighty proclaimed that he was the Prophet sent with the final Law and the only means of salvation was to accept Islam and adapt their lives in accordance with the commandments of God Almighty, then this proclamation was stated as follows by God Almighty:

> *And say, 'It is the truth from your Lord; wherefore let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve.'...* (18:30)

Thereafter, God has preserved this task unto Himself as to how to treat the one who does not believe. God will determine this matter whether in this world or the Hereafter. Therefore, O Prophet and O ye who believe in this Prophet, your work is only to convey the Message. In the interest of maintaining an environment of love and affection and tolerance, you should promote this message with kindness. Because you believe that in accordance with the teaching given to you by God, your religion is right and based on the truth, it is a requirement of kindness to mankind that what you hold to be true for yourself, you should share it with the rest of mankind and include them also in this commandment.

"No Compulsion in Religion

It may be objected that the permission to let people believe or disbelieve was given to the people of Makkah at a time when the position of the Muslims was very weak. It may be said that this is why such words were used so that the disbelievers of Makkah do not cruelly destroy all the Muslims.

This objection is a weak argument. Despite this commandment, the disbelievers of Makkah did not flinch a muscle in their cruelty to the Muslims. They persecuted them because of their faith. Some were laid on burning coal, others were made to lie on the burning sand in the mid-day sun. Some were tied with their legs to two camels and the camels driven in opposite directions cutting asunder the Muslim in two halves. Even the women were beaten and not spared this torture. So if the verse I quoted earlier was meant to save the Muslims from cruelty, then history proves that it did not serve that purpose. This commandment was not limited to that time but is preserved in the Holy Qur'an to this day.

I have given this example of barbaric cruelty so that you can keep this context in your mind. Once again, in keeping within the constraints of time, I hope that you will understand from the one or two events that I will relate, the extent to which Islam grants freedom of conscience and requires tolerance and reconciliation.

Fed up with the cruelty inflicted by their fellow countrymen, the Muslims migrated to Madinah. First of all, the poor and weak Muslims migrated followed by the Holy Prophet of Islam (pboh). Upon his arrival, a pact was drawn with the Jews of Madinah who had not become Muslim at that time stating how the communities were to live together and remain free and how each other's rights were to be discharged.

"Pact between Muslims and Jews of Madinah

I shall mention one or two covenants of this pact of co-existence. But before that a teaching of the Holy Qur'an states:

> *There should be no compulsion in religion...* (2:257)

This commandment was revealed in Madinah. Let me remind you that by that time, a majority of the inhabitants of Madinah had become Muslim, or they were people who had no interest in religion and they joined the Muslims as birds of the same flock. When seen from that vantage point, the Muslim population represented a dominant majority. On the other side were the Jews who ruled and in whose hands lay the power before the arrival in Madinah of the Holy Prophet (pboh). But now the Jews were reduced to a minority. As a consequence, and being the Head of State, the governance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pboh) was firmly established. Now he held the power. However, the commandment was that 'You will not use compulsion in religion, nor shall you use force against those weak persons who even though they are not Muslim, have joined you as your kith and kin, nor shall you use force against the Jews who live under your domain.' But you can see from the pact that was drawn up how an atmosphere of love and affection, freedom of belief and tolerance was created. The pact runs somewhat as follows:

- Muslims and Jews shall live together with each other in kindness and sincerity and shall not commit any excess nor be cruel to one another;
- Jews will keep to their own faith, and Muslims to their own;
- The life and property of all citizens shall be respected and protected save in the case a crime has been committed by someone;
- All disputes will be referred for the Prophet of Allah's decision because he has the determining authority but all decisions in respect of individual people shall be based on their respective laws.

And there are, of course, other terms of this agreement in addition to the four I have quoted. Now, see what effort has been used to establish a liberal and compassionate atmosphere in society. At that time there were no national laws. Each person lived in accordance with the traditions and laws of his or her own clan or tribe. The Holy Prophet (pboh) did not say that you are a minority, and as might is right, you have to comply with the laws of the Muslim majority. Instead, the condition of the agreement was that your affairs would be determined on the basis of your own laws. This is the first charter of freedom of conscience and faith in Islam.

Giving other excellent examples of toleration, the Holy Qur'an explains that no matter what the circumstance, you are not to abandon tolerance. Irrespective of the cruelties inflicted on you, you are not to act other than with justice and take revenge by being just as cruel. If you do that, you are misguided. To call you a Muslim would be meaningless. The Holy Qur'an states:

> *And let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness.* (5:9)

This is the standard of tolerance and justice in Islam. Islam advocates that do not respond to the low and base allegations of the opponents because to do that would make you just as cruel. If you can forgive, then forgive, that is better. If you must seek revenge, then the recompense of an injury should be no more than the injury inflicted on you.

"Examples of the Holy Prophet, pboh

An excellent example of this tolerance and forgiveness was set by the Holy Prophet of Islam (pboh) who forgave all the persecutors at the time of the victory of Makkah. History bears testimony to this event. Ikramah was the greatest enemy of Islam. Despite the general amnesty proclaimed by the Holy Prophet (pboh) on the day of victory, Ikramah picked a fight with the Muslims, suffered a defeat and then fled.

When Ikramah's wife pleaded for his forgiveness, the Holy Prophet (pboh) forgave him. Immediately after forgiveness, when Ikramah appeared before the Holy Prophet (pboh), he said to him arrogantly that 'If you think that because of your forgiveness I have also become a Muslim, then let it be clear that I have not become a Muslim. If you can forgive me while I remain steadfast on my own faith, then that is fine, otherwise I leave'.

The Holy Prophet (pboh) said, 'You can, no doubt, remain steadfast on your faith. You are free in every way.' Moreover, thousands of Makkans had not accepted Islam and despite their defeat, exercised their right of freedom of faith. So this is the teaching of the Holy Qur'an and the example set by the Holy Prophet (pboh) in this matter. I shall present some other examples of freedom of speech and tolerance.

Once the Holy Prophet (pboh) bought a camel from a Bedouin in exchange for about 90 kilos of dried dates. When the Prophet got home, he found that the dates had all gone.

In all honesty and simplicity, he went to the Bedouin and said frankly to him, 'O man of God! I bought a camel in exchange for dried dates and I thought that I had that much dates with me but when I reached home, I discovered that I did not have that many dates.'

The Bedouin said, 'O defrauder!' The people began to tell the Bedouin off for talking to the Messenger of God in that manner but the Holy Prophet (pboh) said, 'Let him be.' (Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal Vol.6 p.268 published Beirut)

Now see this is how the ruler of the day dealt with an ordinary man. This was the standard of granting the freedom of speech and the standard of his forbearance.

Then let me present an incident about the freedom of faith with reference to people of other faiths. Once a delegation of Christians from Najaran came to the Holy Prophet (pboh). During this meeting with him in the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, the time for the Christians to say their prayers arose and they began to go outside. The Holy Prophet (pboh) invited them to offer their prayers in the Mosque. Then the pact drawn with these Christians of Najaran granted them full freedom of faith and it was made incumbent upon the Muslims to protect their churches. No church should be destroyed nor should any priest be evicted or expelled. Nor should any right of theirs be diminished. Nor should any Christian be required to change his faith. The proclamation was that the Holy Prophet (pboh) hereby warrants his personal assurance. The pact went so far as to say that if the Muslims wish to help fund the repair etc. of the Christian churches, it would be an act of benevolence on their part.

With regard to justice, truth and the freedom of faith, the Founder of Jama'at Ahmadiyya, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on him) states that it is proven that once a dispute between a Muslim and a Jew came before the Holy Prophet (pboh). The Holy Prophet (pboh) determined that the Jew was true and decreed against the claims of the Muslim. Then quoting the Holy Qur'an, he states that this verse means 'O Prophet! ask the people of the Book and the ignorant people of Arabia to enter the religion of Islam. So if they enter Islam, they have attained guidance but if they turn away, then your work is only to convey the Message of God.' It is not written in this verse that it is your task to wage war against them.

It is obvious from this verse that war was only permitted against the criminals who killed the Muslims or interfered with the maintenance of peace and were busy in theft and robbery. This war was as a result of his being a Commander and not because of his prophethood. Allah says 'fight in the cause of the Lord against those who fight with you', that is to say, 'be disinterested in others and do not commit any excess'. God does not like those who commit excesses.

So this is the beautiful teaching of Islam and the excellent example of the Holy Prophet of Islam (pboh), a specimen of which I have laid before you. It is a great travesty to allege that there is no concept of freedom of faith and conscience in Islam. We should not construe the vested interest of a few individuals as Islam nor can it be construed as such.

In any case, it would have become abundantly clear that whereas there is freedom of speech and tolerance in Islam, there is also the respect for mankind and forbearance.

In keeping within the constraints of time, I rest my case. I am most grateful to all of you. I think that the food is ready, and I do not wish to come between your food and you. I am most grateful to you who have come here today and listened to me, tolerantly. If we can meet together, many misunderstandings about each other can be removed. I once again thank you from the bottom of my heart for sparing your time to be with us today.

Religious Terrorism:
Causes and Remedies - Part II

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A Warning; a Prayer

The Promised Messiah had advised the rulers of the land to conduct educational programs about the issue of *Jihad* to free up the Muslims from this barbaric practice. He urged them to do every possible effort for this cause, and told them that it was better for them to do so and said:

"Otherwise, the time of the Promised Messiah has arrived. Nevertheless, now Allah the Exalted will produce such heavenly means, where (before) the world was filled with oppression, and unjustified blood-shedding, now, it will be filled with justice, peace, and reconciliation. Blessed are those Ameers and Kings who partake from it.' (British Government and *Jihad*, Roohani Khaza in, Volume 17, p.17)

The last part of this warning and prayer, "Blessed are those *Ameers* and Kings who partake from it' contains a prayer. According to it, it still has to be seen, who are those fortunate rulers who by acting upon the advice of Hadhrat Promised Messiah prove the falsehood of this bloody ideology of *Jihad*, and become recipient of his prayers, and the divine blessings.

Unfortunately, the effort required to educate the masses to reform them regarding the bloody ideology of *Jihad* was not carried out by the *Ameer* and the ruler of Kabul, and he did not value the advice of the apostle of the time and the Messiah of the time. As a result, this nation, like the unfortunate, disbeliever and denier Jews of the time of the early Christians, continued advancing towards further hardening of their hearts, and in their tyrannical and oppressive activities. It is the same land, where high ranking companions of Hadhrat Aqdas, the Promised Messiah were very brutally martyred because of the religious differences under the influence of the bloody ideology of *Jihad* of the *Mullahs*. Hadhrat Maulvi Abdul Rehman was martyred by wrapping a cloth around his neck and suffocating him, and Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif, the chief of Khost was first heavily chained and handcuffed, and tortured in a prison, and his nose was pierced to pass a rope through it, and then he was dragged with this rope with great jest, ridicule, abuse, and curse, to the place of his murder. He was then buried in the ground up to the waist, and brutally stoned until there was a huge pile of stones over his head. It was such a heinous crime that makes our heart cry, and send shudders through our body. After him, his wife and orphan children were also brutally tortured and some of them were martyred.

We see that none of the many rulers of Afghanistan as well as of Pakistan availed the opportunity to denounce the bloody ideology of *Jihad* of *Mullahs*, rather they, labeling the Promised Messiah a denier of *Jihad*, raised such a fire of rejection, hostility, and dissension against his Jama at which resulted in great persecution of Ahmadis with the backing of the rulers and the constitution. Dozens of Ahmadis were brutally martyred, and hundreds, rather thousands had to bear the hardships of imprisonment. Their assets and properties were looted and set on fire, and they were put through every possible atrocity, and it still continues to this day. The Promised Messiah mentioning the dreadful martyrdom of Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif in his book '*Tazkara-tush Shahadatain* said:

The land of Kabul will witness what types of fruits are born by this blood. This blood will not be wasted. Previously, poor Abdur Rehman of my Jama at was persecuted and killed, and Allah remained quiet. But now He will not remain quiet on this blood, and it will have major consequences.' (*Tazkaratush Shahadatain,* Roohani Khaza in, Volume 20, p.74)

History is a witness that Allah did not remain quiet on this blood. This land has seen many rainy days, and many bloody rainy days, but the marks of that holy blood have not gone away. Today, the cause of the bloody colour of this land is the rejection of the true ideology of *Jihad* mentioned by the Holy Qur an and the Messenger of Allah, and not paying heed to the warnings of the Messiah of the time, and the unjust shedding of innocent blood, that has been shed in the name of religion. How true is the following saying of Hazoor:

> *Why is the punishment of Allah awakened, ask me? The days of my denial have provoked it.'*

The Unfair and Provocative Behaviour of Christian Pastors and Like-minded Western Authors

The Christian pastors and their like-minded western authors very often and frequently spread false propaganda against Islam that Islam (Allah forbid), is a terrorist religion, and it teaches Muslims in the name of *Jihad* for Allah to shed the blood of innocent people, and to spread dissension and rebellion on mere religious differences. In order to prove their false claims, these pastors and the so-called scholars and researchers ignore the context of the verses of the Holy Qur an, and the proven historical facts, and distort the events using every kind of deception and misrepresentation. They also commit the grave offence of attributing meanings of their own choice to the Holy Qur an. In support of these views, they also present sayings and commentaries of those so-called scholars of Islam, who are overcome by the passion of their *Nafs-e-ammara* (inciting-self) and are hungry for power, and attribute their own self-concocted commentaries to the Holy Qur an, and spread the bloody ideology of *Jihad* under the pretext of the holy slogan of *Jihad* in the name of Allah, and spread dissension and rebellion. This practice of the Christian pastors is definitely not aligned to righteousness and justice. It is clearly unfair to hold Islam responsible for the hypocritical acts of a few misguided people.

We are aware that Hadhrat Jesus addressing his followers said:

"But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.' (Matthew, Chapter 5, Verse 39 to 45)

But today we see that that the rulers associated with this chosen servant of Allah act totally against this teaching, and make their enemies the target of persecution and ill-treatment using different excuses, and drop horrific and highly destructive bombs on them, and carry on barbaric treatment. Will it be fair to attribute the responsibility of the actions of these misguided Christians upon Hadhrat Jesus, or on his pure teachings? If not, and certainly not, then is it not unjust and unfair to blame Islam and its founder for the terrorist activities of the few so-called Muslims?

Islam and its founder, Hadhrat Muhammad (pboh) expressed complete disgust with the people holding these terrorist views and the ones who carry out such acts. The Holy Qur an says it many times that Allah the Exalted does not love the rebellious people. He does not love those who are unjust, and does not like dissension. As the Holy Prophet (pboh) was the mercy for all the worlds, his blessed sayings, and innumerable pure examples shimmering in the historical books and the books about his life show that even the pain of his sworn enemies would make him restless.

He possessed the highest caliber of human sympathy, justice, and other moral virtues. So many fair-minded western intellectuals and researchers have also paid tribute to the excellences of the Islamic teachings, and the wisdom of the sayings of the Holy Prophet (pboh), and attested that Islam is a peaceful religion, and the blame on Islam of persecution, and torture is totally false and baseless.

Rather, we see that in the current times, the rulers of the Christian governments, who blindly drop bombs on some Muslim countries on the pretext of the terrorism of the few so-called Muslims and extremists, and are involved in the tyrannical acts of destroying the lives of thousands of innocent people, are also forced to state that the views of the people involved in carrying out terrorist activities in the name of *Jihad* are based on distorted teachings of Islam, and they are defaming Islam, and that Islam s real teachings have nothing to do with these people.

They also accept that the majority of the Muslims are peace loving, and friendly, and they look at the acts of these terrorists with hate, and reject them. But we also see that whenever they get an opportunity, they overlook these differences, and spread the propaganda that Islam is violent, bloody, and terrorist, and is against peace, and the western media repeats this propaganda with great intensity and frequency. Their behaviour is not based on righteousness and justice, and it does not help in the establishment of social peace, rather, without any reason it provokes people and causes dissension.

Advice to Pastors and Christian Rulers

The Promised Messiah had advised the Christian people and the Christian rulers to act with fairness, and stay away from provocations. He said:

"We have repeatedly written that the Holy Qur an certainly does not teach jihad. The reality is that in the early period (of Islam), some of the opponents tried to stop and eradicate Islam with the use of sword. So Islam raised the sword against them in its defense, and the injunction was specifically about them that they either be killed or accept Islam. So, this injunction was for a specific time, not forever. And Islam is not responsible for the clearly wrong and selfish activities of the kings which were committed after the time of the prophethood. Whoever now repeatedly reminds the unwise Muslims about the issue of Jihad to deceive them is provoking this poisonous habit. It would have been good if the pastors, keeping in view the factual events, would have stressed that there is no Jihad in Islam, and there is no instruction to forcefully convert people to Islam. The Holy Qu ran has the following injunction:

There is no compulsion in religion. (2:257)

How can a book with this injunction teach Jihad? How can we complain about the Maulvis when we also have complaints about the pastors, that they did not adopt the course that was based on truth and beneficial for the Government?' (British Government and *Jihad*, Roohani Khaza in, Volume 17, p.31,32)

The Promised Messiah concluded:

"In my view, it is necessary for the government to stop the pastors from this dangerous concoction which has resulted in discord and revolt in the country. People do not abandon Islam due to these unnecessary concoctions of the pastors, however these speeches always remind the public about the issue of Jihad, and awaken the sleeping public' (British Government and *Jihad*, Roohani Khaz-a in, Volume 17, p.9)

He further advised the ruling authorities:

"For some time, this method of discussion, where parties criticise each other s religion should be banned.'

He further elaborated on this advice by saying:

"In my opinion, the recently adopted practice of the Roman government is good. So, for an experimental period of a few years, every group should be totally forbidden from directly or indirectly mentioning any other religion in its writings or speeches, but they would be allowed to describe the excellences of their own religion to their heart s desire. In this way, the new biases would not be seeded and the old tales would be forgotten, and people would turn towards mutual love and reconciliation. And when the barbaric people of the Frontier Region would notice that much mutual love and affection has been created between other nations, they would be influenced by it and start treating Christians with sympathy just as a Muslim treats his brother.' (British Government and *Jihad*, Volume 17, p.22)

Similarly he said:

"At least for five years, the practice of attacking other religions should be banned, and there should be a complete prohibition on attacking the beliefs of the other religions. These practices are daily increasing dissension in the country, and as a result some of the groups have stopped having friendly meetings with other groups, because, a party owing to its lack of knowledge about the other religion may raise such objections which are untrue, and cause extreme pain. Many a times, these practices result in a dissension like the objection of Jihad on the Muslims and may remind the other party about the forgotten passion, and eventually lead to dissension.

So, if our wise government promulgates this law for five years that all the parties of British India including the pastors should be completely banned from attacking other religions, and only meet with love and display good qualities, and everyone only discusses the excellences of his religion, I am certain that this poisonous plant of dissension and bias, which is internally growing will soon stop, and

this praiseworthy act of government would also have an impact on the people of the Frontier Regions, and lead to peace and reconciliation.' (British Government and *Jihad*, Roohani Khaza in, Volume 17, p.32,32)

The Promised Messiah said:

"If a religion has a truth, it should be brought out rather than criticising it. Not every ruler will act or accept the advice that I am putting forward, only the highly wise rulers would understand its reality.' (British Government and *Jihad*, Roohani Khaza in, Volume 17, p.33)

Unfortunately, no one acted upon the visionary suggestions of the apostle of the time, Arbiter and Justice, Hadhrat Aqdas, the Promised Messiah for the establishment of religious tolerance, social peace and friendship, and as a result, today, one hundred years later, the terrorist activities have become a norm of the day, and every single day, the entire world is sinking deeper and deeper in the marshland of discord and dissension.

The Christian pastors probably did not accept these suggestions because it was very hard for them to show their religious truths from their books as opposed to Islam. They were unable to prove the false beliefs of the godliness of Jesus, Trinity, and Atonement from their religious books; therefore, they thought it appropriate to raise objections on Islam basing it on the concocted philosophy of *Jihad* of the few so-called Muslims, because:

"The rule is that when one cannot attack another religion with truth and justice, a lot of people start attacking using unjustified accusations.' (Chashma Masih, Roohani Khaza in, Volume 20, p.337)

It is probably for the same reason, that the enemies of Islam raise false objections on the Holy Qur an, and are busy in the dirty schemes of heaping great insults, degrading, abusing, concocting and saying hurtful things to the Muslims against Islam and its founder, Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa (pboh) in order to dissuade them away from Islam.

Divine Decree

But now this scheme will not last too long, because the Promised Messiah, that Allah the Exalted was supposed to send for the eradication of the Christian dissension, has already come, and that pure and chaste being said:

"I have been sent at this time to save Islam from the attacks of the false religions, and to present the powerful arguments for the truthfulness of Islam. I certainly say that Islam will be victorious, and its signs have already appeared. This is true that no sword or gun is required for this victory, and neither has Allah sent me with weapons. Anyone who thinks like this is an unwise friend of Islam.

The purpose of religion is to conquer hearts, and it cannot be done with the sword. As so many times, I have shown that the sword picked up by the Holy Prophet (pboh) was only for the sake of self-protection and self-defense, and it was done only when the atrocities of the opponents and the deniers had exceeded all limits, and the earth had turned red with the blood of the poor Muslims. In essence, the reason for my arrival is the victory of Islam on other religions.' (Lecture Ludhiana, Roohani Khaza in, Volume 20, p.293, 294)

So, with the coming of the Messiah of the time, the winds of the Unity of Allah for the support of truth have started blowing from the heavens, and the angels of Allah have started descending upon the hearts of the good-natured people making provisions for their guidance, and people have started relinquishing false doctrines. Today, the work of the presentation of the final arguments in the entire world is being carried out with great strength by the grand leadership of the true Khilafat of Ahmadiyya Islam established after the Promised Messiah.

We finish this essay with the majestic and sympathetic advice and the message of the Arbiter and the Judge, Hadhrat Aqdas, the Promised Messiah for the Muslims of the entire world:

"Muslims should appreciate the enlightenments and the blessings descending from the heaven at this time, and thank Allah the Exalted. But if they do not appreciate this reward of Allah the Exalted, Allah the Exalted will not care about them at all, and will certainly complete His task. Allah the Exalted has willed to wipe out the other religions, and give victory and strength to Islam. Now, there is no hand or power that could stand in the way of the will of Allah the Exalted.' (Lecture Ludhiana, Roohani Khaza in, Volume 20, p.290).

Survival from the Cross

By Hadhrat Maulana Abul Ata

The Birth of Jesus

Strangely enough, the three great religions of the world, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, are at variance with one another with regard to both the birth and the death of Jesus Christ, who was born among the Jews. The Jews declare his birth to be illegitimate and they are guilty of uttering a grievous calumny against Mary, mother of Jesus. They declare him to be a misfit to "enter the congregation of the Lord" because of his illegitimate birth, God forbid.

Christians on the other hand, believe that Jesus Christ was born without the agency of an earthly father and that he was therefore the Son of God Himself. This shows that both Jews and Christians have gone to opposite extremes regarding his birth.

Muslims for their part believe that Jesus was born without the agency of an earthly father, but he was not the Son of God. A fatherless birth may be a strange incident but is not unnatural. There have been cases in medical history where innocent virgins have given birth to babies. Even Adam, the progenitor of the modern human race is unanimously believed by the three great religions of the world to have been born without the agency of either father or mother.

Muslims believe that Jesus was a true prophet of God. His birth without the agency of man has nothing to do with his sonship or his divinity. He was human, pure and simple. Jesus invariably calls himself the 'Son of man' in the New Testament.

The Death of Jesus

The death of Jesus is an equally controversial affair among Jews, Christians and Muslims. Jews believe that Jesus died on the cross because he was a false prophet in accordance with the Bible:

> *"And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he beput to death, and thou hang him on a tree. ... (he) is the accursed ofGod...."* (Deut. 21:22-23).

According to them, as Jesus died on the cross, he became accursed of God, and was thus proven to be a false prophet.

The Christians also believe that Jesus was hanged on the cross and died an accursed death. Paul says:

> *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."* (Galatians, 3:13)

But the Holy Qur an declares that Christ did not die on the Cross. God saved him from death by crucifixion, in the same way as He saved His dear ones from tribulations. Did not Jonah, another prophet, come out alive from the belly of the whale?

The fact of the matter is that Jesus Christ only fell into a swoon on the Cross, but when he was taken down from it he recovered. He then died a natural death at the good old age of 120.

On the strength of the belief that Jesus was a false prophet, the Jews, particularly the Pharisees of his time, brought serious political charges against him. They alleged that he was disloyal to the Roman Emperor and that he had claimed himself to be the King of the Jews. The governor, Pontius Pilate was not convinced of his guilt but being influenced by the tumult of the multitude, he delivered Jesus to be crucified. They put him on the cross where he remained, at the most, for three or four hours only and then was taken down in a comatose state and placed in a sepulchre in a garden nearby.

It took several days for criminals to die by crucifixion. They suffered the pangs of hunger and thirst and in most cases their legs were broken. They died a lingering death extending over several days. However, it was not so in the case of Jesus Christ. He was put on the Cross on a Friday afternoon. The following being the Sabbath day, a day of religious observance for the Jews, and no criminal could remain on the Cross on that Holy day, so he was taken down from it after about three or four hours. The loss of blood from the wounds caused him to fall unconscious. He was taken for a dead man. His body was placed in a sepulchre in a garden by Joseph of Arimathaea, his own disciple. Jesus being still alive in the sepulchre, left it on the third day in disguise and met his disciples at Galilee and ate with them. His wounds were healed by the application of an ointment especially prepared by his disciples for the purpose.

This is the real story of the crucifixion of Jesus. The Christian version of his death is not only inaccurate but also is against historical evidence and logic. They believe that Jesus actually died on the Cross and on the third day he rose up to the heavens. What a paradox! What a myth! Modern Christianity rests on the belief that Jesus died on the Cross. However, if it is proved that he did not die on the Cross nor did he rise from the dead, then the whole edifice of Christianity crumbles to the ground. Paul, who is the real founder of modern Christianity, himself says:

"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain." (I Corinthians 15:14).

The late Dr. Zwemer, a well-known American missionary has said:

"If our belief in the death of Christ on the Cross is wrong then the whole of Christianity is a farce."

I - The Sign of Jonah

Now we shall proceed with our arguments from the Bible itself to show that Jesus did not die on the Cross. We read in the New Testament:

"And when the people were gathered thick together, he (Jesus) began to say, this is an evil generation: they seek a sign: and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." (Luke 11:29,30).

Again:

"But he answered and said unto them: an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12:39,40)

Jesus Christ is here comparing his own fate with that of the Prophet Jonah. Now what was the sign given by Jonah to the Ninevites? The Bible says:

"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

"Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God from the belly of the fish. And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me out of the belly of the fish cried I for help, and thou heardest, my voice." (Jonah 1:17, & 2:1,2)

According to these verses in the Bible, Jonah was swallowed up by a big fish, where he remained three days and three nights and then came out alive from the belly of the fish. It was a sign given to the Ninevites. Jonah prayed to God for deliverance while in the belly of the fish, the Lord heard his prayer and Jonah came out alive. Jesus says that no sign shall be given to the evil and adulterous generation of his time except that of Jonas. Now what is the resemblance between the two signs of Jonas and Jesus? It is nothing but going alive into the belly of the fish and the heart of the earth and coming out alive. Both Jonah and Jesus cried by reason of their respective afflictions and prayed to their Lord for deliverance. The prayers of both were heard! If Jesus did not enter the heart of the Earth (sepulchre) alive, and come out alive, where is the resemblance of the two signs?

Jesus promised to show only one sign to the generation of his time but even if that sign did not prove to be true, is there anything also to prove the truth of his claim to be a prophet? Jesus' reference to the sign of Jonah simply means that he would not die on the cross. Therefore, there is every reason to believe that the swoon theory is not based on a wrong hypothesis.

II - Pontius Pilate's wife sees a dream:

"When he (Pilate) was sat down on the Judgement seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man (Jesus): for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." (Matthew 27:19)

Pilate's wife's dream was really true and quite opportune. It purports to mean that Christ be saved from the accursed death on the Cross. God saves his dear ones by means of dreams of others as was the case with Joseph who was released from jail having interpreted the two dreams of Pharaoh. God wanted to protect Jesus against his enemies, hence the dream of the Roman governor's wife which influenced his judgement.

III - The Roman Governor's sympathetic attitude

The Jews presented the case of Jesus Christ to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Palestine. He held a judicial inquiry into the case and declared that he was not guilty of the charges brought against him. He said to them:

"Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accused him." (Luke 23:14)

"He went out again unto the Jews and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye, therefore, that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber." (John 18:38,40)

"And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." (John 19:12)

From the references given above, it is evident that the Governor regarded Jesus innocent of all the charges brought against him by the Jews. He tried his utmost to release him but when the Jews threatened to report him to Caesar at Rome, he yielded to them and handed Jesus over to them but secretly he took measures to see that Jesus should be saved. He had his wife's dream before him and he knew full well that the chief priests had conspired against him because of envy.

IV - Pontius Pilate's attempts to save Christ

Pilate was thoroughly convinced of the innocence of Jesus Christ. He therefore, had devised a scheme to save Jesus' life. As a responsible official of the Roman Empire, he could not openly come to the forefront, but he was the master-mind of the whole scheme and the lead character in the drama. Other characters of the show were Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable councillor and disciple of Jesus Christ. He had already had a sepulchre hewn out in a rock garden nearby. Another actor in the drama was a learned Jew named Nicodemus who was also privy to the whole matter. We read of him in St. John:

"And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pound weight" (John 19:39)

It was very wise of Pilate to choose Friday afternoon as the time for Jesus' crucifixion so that he could not remain on the cross after sunset. The following day was Sabbath, a holy day to the Jews. He selected Joseph and Nicodemus as the most trusted friends to execute the plan. All necessary measures were adopted to bring Jesus to consciousness. Otherwise, what did Nicodemus mean by bringing the mixture of myrrh and aloes? Jesus was shown to have died in official records, to pacify the Jews and the Imperial government in Rome. Joseph of Arimathaea boldly asked the Governor to hand over the 'body' of Jesus, a request he readily granted. If the plan was not pre-conceived, how could the Governor hand over the 'body' of Jesus to a stranger from outside? There is reason to believe that Jesus Christ himself must have been informed of the plan, so that his prophecy might come true; "That as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Nicodemus' meeting with Jesus Christ the previous night brings into light the whole story.

V - Duration of Crucifixion

The period of time Jesus remained on the Cross was not long enough to warrant his death by crucifixion. Criminals generally took several days to die a lingering death on the cross, on account of the loss of blood from the wounds on hands and feet, the physical exhaustion, pain, pangs of hunger and thirst. The minimum time of death on the cross ranged between twenty-four hours and twenty-eight hours but in some cases it took several days to die on the cross. In such cases the legs of the criminals would be broken so that death may be hastened by internal haemorrhage.

Further investigation into the matter of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ tells us that Jesus remained on the cross for a few hours only. The actual duration of time Jesus remained on the cross was not more than three or four hours. Jesus Christ, who was in the prime of his youth (33 years old) and enjoyed excellent health, could not be expected to have died within such a short time, especially when his legs were not broken as was done in the case of the two robbers crucified with him the same day.

It may not be out of place here to note that according to the Roman calendar the day began with the rising of the sun and ended with its setting. The same custom is in vogue even to this day in Arab countries. According to John 19:14 it was about the sixth hour of Friday that Pilate spoke last to the Jews about Jesus' crucifixion and handed him over to them:

> *"And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani? My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me?"* (Mark 15:33, 34)

This clearly shows that Jesus retained his consciousness up to the ninth hour of the day and then he fell into a swoon or lost consciousness. This is what the New Testament writers call "giving up the ghost." None of the writers were present on the spot to stand as eye-witnesses. The 'swoon' was taken to be 'death' and 'death on the cross' means an accursed death. Do we not read in the Bible, "for he that is hanged is accursed of God." Deut. 21:23. What audacity on the part of Christians to call a true prophet of God accursed of God!

VI - Blood and water

> *"Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and say that he was 'dead' already, they brake not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."* (John 19:32,33,34)

The soldiers did not break the legs of Jesus for they took him for a dead man. while actually he was unconscious, or just to silence the angry Jews he was declared to be a 'dead' man. But one of the soldiers "pierced his side and forthwith there came out blood and water," which is a sure sign of life, for blood and water do not come out of a dead man's body due to the blood pressure being exerted by the heart. There is much food for thought for those who care to ponder over it.

VII - No Eye-witnesses

Three writers of the Gospels state that there was darkness over all the land from the sixth to the ninth hour and that there was an earthquake and the rocks were rent and the veil of the temple was rent in twain. It is a matter of common experience, that at the time of a severe dust storm accompanied by an earthquake, people generally hasten to go home and they do not enjoy the luxury of a bloody sight-seeing. Now imagine for a moment, who could remain to be an eye-witness to tell the story that Jesus actually died on the cross? The Jews, if there were any on the spot, must have run away at the sight of the rising storm and the shaking of the earth must have frightened them to turn on their heels and hastened to their homes. As for the disciples they had already fled from the scene of the crucifixion.

> *"Peter began to curse and to swear saying, I know not this man (Jesus) of whom you speak."* (Mark 14:71)

> *"And they all forsook him (Jesus) and fled."* (Mark 14:50)

To be brief, there was no one present on the scene who could definitely and certainly say that he saw Jesus 'giving up the ghost.' This is all mere conjecture and imagination.

VIII - Jesus' mission to the lost sheep of Israel

1 *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost'* (Luke 19:10)
2 *"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be onefold and one shepherd"* (John 10:16)
3 *"And he said unto them, I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also; For therefore I am sent"* (Luke 4:43).
4 *"But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matthew 15:24).

From the quotations given above, it is apparent that Jesus' mission was to preach to all twelve tribes of Israel. They were scattered in the eastern countries extending from Palestine to India at the time of Jesus' appearance. Of the twelve tribes of Israel there were at that time, only two were in Palestine. Jesus cannot be said to have been successful in his mission, if he did not address and preach to the ten lost sheep of Israel. The supposed death of Jesus on the cross at the early age of thirty-three year deals a shattering blow to the mission on which he was sent. The truth of the matter is that Jesus Christ, after his escape from the cross, migrated to the East in search of the lost sheep. There is ample historical evidence for this supported by the modern 'finds' of archaeology.

Jesus found his lost sheep in Persia, Afghanistan and Kashmir, preached to them and comparatively, he was much more successful here, than in Palestine. He died a natural death and was buried in Srinagar, Kashmir.

IX - Jesus' victory over his enemies

Addressing his disciples Jesus says:

"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:32,33).

Now what does Jesus' victory consist of? His death on the cross or in his escape from the cross? If he died on the cross, then the Jews were successful because their very aim was to prove that he was false in calling himself the Messiah. They had in their support, the Biblical statement that "*...he that is hanged is accursed of God*" (Dent 21:23).

But if we believe that he was taken down from the cross alive, unconscious and he entered the heart of the Earth alive and came out of it alive, then he can rightly be said to have overcome his enemies and frustrated all their evil designs. Jesus said:

"For as Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." (Luke 11:30)

In other words, Jesus said to the Jews that God Almighty would save him from the clutches of death in the same way as He had saved Jonah from the belly of the whale. The similarity between the two incidents can be real and genuine only when Jesus enters the heart of the Earth (grave) alive and comes out alive.

X - His prayer was heard

From the study of the Bible we learn that God listens to the prayers of His apostles and saves them from tribulations and trials. In the New Testament we read:

"...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (James 5:16-18).

Again we read:

"...And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said father I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it that they may believe that Thou hast sent me." (John 11:41,42)

"And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will but what Thou wilt." (Mark 14:36)

From the quotations given above, it is clear that Jesus was terribly afraid of being put to the cross, so he fervently prayed that the bitter cup be taken away from him. Jesus passionately and fervently prayed to God that he might be saved the accursed death on the Cross. How could he then, say that he overcame the world? If he had died on the Cross, the mission of his whole life would have come to naught and wrongdoers could challenge his claim to prophethood. The thought of death on the cross was unacceptable to him. Being a righteous prophet, he was not afraid of mere death. He was certainly afraid of dying on the cross, as such a death could be interpreted to mean an accursed death, which was the very negation of his prophetic mission.

"In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death and was heard in that he feared." (Hebrews 5:7).

Hence, we must presume that his earnest prayer was, no doubt heard and he miraculously escaped death by crucifixion and lived long enough to preach his mission to the lost sheep of the Israelites in the East:

"And he said unto them, I must preach The Kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4:43).

These arguments prove that the idea of the death of Christ by crucifixion cannot be justified even from the Biblical point of view. Therefore, it is evident that the present Christian faith based on this erroneous idea, cannot hold ground.

Charity Walk 2008

Address by Waleed Ahmad Sahib, Sadr Ansarullah UK, at the Charity Walk Dinner held on 26 October 2008

Mr Chairman, Your Worships the Mayor of Waverley and Wandsworth, and Guests,

Assalamo-alaikum peace be upon you.

We are gathered here today for the culmination of the Charity Walk that took place back in June this year. Many of you who participated then and supported us, I am pleased to see you here with us today and we are very grateful to all those who made the effort of walking the 12 miles of the route for a good cause.

The walk itself took merely a few hours and was only 12 miles long but, as organisers, our journey was a lot longer. It began at the beginning of 2008 with the formation of an organising committee under the Chairmanship of Mr Abdul Rashid Mirza.

Planning meetings started soon afterwards and became a weekly feature by the time we entered the month of April and continued until the date of the Walk. Some of these meetings were long and even protracted taking us into the early hours of the morning. There was much agonising and deliberation over some crucial decisions and even then we did not get everything right. It was only after this that we were able to set up the Walk that occurred in June. Following the fund raiser, the painstaking work of drawing in the collections took place and has continued until now.

The fact that many of us have white hair now - or no hair at all in some cases - is not because of our age but because of the worry that we endured when planning the Walk and that I am afraid never changes for as soon as we have finished one Walk, the planning of the next one begins so there is no prospect for us in regaining our boyish good looks and full head of hair again.

But I suppose this is a small price to pay for the opportunity of serving others.

As a result of the Walk we are pleased to announce that we have raised £201,057.32 and this will be rounded up when we come to distributing the cheques. The figure of over £200,000 being achieved is a record for any single Walk organised by the Community. If you consider that we only raised a few pounds at our first Walk 23 years ago, this feat shows how far we have come.

Indeed it is fitting that a record sum was raised this year because 2008 represents the Centenary for the Community celebrating 100 years of spiritual leadership, or Caliphate. It is for this reason that the three main auxiliary organisations of the Association, the Lajna representing the ladies, the Khuddam the youth and the Ansar representing us, joined forces to organise this event. Therefore all the achievements mentioned reflect the efforts of ALL members of the Community, young and old, male and female.

If it was fitting that such a record sum was raised this year, it is also fitting that this, the final act of the distribution of cheques for the Walk, is taking place here in Islamabad. At the occasion of the Walk I had mentioned how we enjoyed an affinity with the Boroughs of Wandsworth and Merton since they host our mosques there. But Mr Mayor (referring to the Mayor of Waverley), we also have a strong affinity with this Borough, the Borough of Waverley as well, because of Islamabad being here and because it was from here all those years ago that the very first Walk took place back in 1985.

It was part of the vision of our then spiritual leader, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (may God have mercy on him). He, like all our leaders, ascribed a high degree of importance to the service of others and projects like these, that help to alleviate suffering, were dear to him. He died in 2003 and is buried only a few hundred yards away but his legacy remains. This demonstrates that well intentioned good deeds can acquire a life of their own and can continue to disseminate benefit long into the future after you have gone.

Ladies and Gentlemen, these days we are going through some difficult times. What with high fuel prices and an uncertain credit market we may feel we are facing monumental problems, but if you think about it, this is nothing compared to the kind of problems faced daily in certain parts of Africa where people are dying of starvation and where obtaining

the basic necessities of life like water is a daily challenge. Those poor souls do not require a fancy rescue plan or a multi billion pound bail out all they want is a tap or a water-well costing less than a £1,000.

That is why our main focus this year came to address this particular issue and we resolved to dedicate a substantial amount of funds from our Charity Walk to help eradicate this problem in Africa. Through the funds raised we hope to establish up to 100 wells in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Sierra Leone.

One of the objectives of these Walks is to meet like minded people and bring people from various disparate backgrounds together for a common good. In this respect we are very pleased for the support that we have received. In particular from the leaders of our Community - our Mayors. Cllr Martin Whelton, the Mayor of Merton, joined us for the start and then the finish of the walk not that he did not fancy what we were doing in between i.e. the 12 mile Walk, but he had other engagements to attend to. Cllr John Fairbrother, the Mayor of Wandsworth, was with us during the walk egging the participants along, while Cllr Bate, the Mayor of Waverley, and his good wife surpassed them all by spending the entire day with us and are present here again today. To all of them we are very grateful for their support.

Returning to the current climate, there is much doom and gloom when that so called never ending boom has suddenly descended into an uncertain bust. When even banks are beginning to rely on hand outs, or bail outs as they call it, to survive, times must be hard. As the recession looms, there are fears of a consequential rise in crime and social disruption. It is at times like this that our attention to charitable works can decline but it is also at times like these that qualities that lead to such charitable works are more in need than ever qualities like compassion, sensitivity and caring for others. It is these qualities that many of the charity workers share, and which will help stave off many of the potential dangers we face and ensure our social cohesion during these difficult times.

As Muslims, this work is dear to us because charity, according to Islam, is a part of our faith and a solemn duty. It is for this reason that our members have gone to extraordinary lengths to raise the funds they have. There have been some heroic feats. Mr Munawar Ali who collected over £3,000 was mentioned at the Charity Walk. He is ill and can hardly walk unaided but this did not deter him in going out on a daily basis in all weathers for this cause.

If that is the example set by the elders, the young are not far behind. One 7 year old girl 7 years old collected over £700 by dragging her parents door to door to help her raise money for the Walk. There are many such examples.

This standard of dedication was also displayed by our organisers. Two of them suffered bereavements during this period. Our head of collection, Ch Zaheer Ahmad lost his brother who sadly passed away last month and had to travel to Pakistan to deal with the final arrangements. But such is his dedication, he recognised that his absence had caused a decline in the collection and was willing to foot the shortfall from his own pocket, offering to pay £15,000 to compensate for this.

The same can be said of our Chairman Mirza Rashid Sahib who lost his niece only last week but continued to work hard for this cause. He paid his respects, attended the funeral of his niece - and was back the next day to help organise this function.

Such devotion and dedication is admirable but I have to say that it is typical for Ahmadi Muslims because this is what Islam teaches us. I know there is a tiny minority in this world who follow Islam differently. They use it or should I say abuse it - to bomb and maim indiscriminately but they are a tiny minority. The vast majority of Muslims do not subscribe to this form of Islam. True Islam is what we are all Muslims and non Muslims alike are trying to depict here of selfless dedication, of compassion and service to others a religion that promotes life, not destroys it, a faith that encourages the alleviation of human suffering, not its imposition, a teaching that seeks the serving for others and not their exploitation. Indeed it was these values that the founder of Islam himself portrayed and it is these values that we are trying to emulate - at least in part - with this Walk.

I trust that you have found your association with us pleasant and useful and I very much hope that we can join together again for another Walk in the future.

Thank You.

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esentation of a commemorative shield at the Ijtema to Hadhrat Amir-ul-Momineen Khalifa-tul-Masih V by Majlis Ansarullah UK to mark the occasion of the Khilafat Centenary Year.

Zaeem Tooting receiving the Almay Inami award for the best performing Ziamat of 2008 from Hadhur Aqdas.








